

CLAIMS

That which is claimed is:

1. An article of footwear comprising:

an upper for covering at least a portion of a foot of a wearer;

a foot-supporting member that is removably-received by the upper, the foot-supporting member having a lower surface located opposite a foot-engaging surface, the lower surface being at a first elevation in a forefoot region of the foot-supporting member and the lower surface being at a second elevation in a heel region of the foot-supporting member, the second elevation being greater than the first elevation to define a recess below the heel region, the foot-supporting member also having a first thickness in the forefoot region and a second thickness in the heel region, the first thickness being greater than the second thickness; and

a sole structure attached to the upper.

2. The article of footwear of claim 1, wherein the foot-engaging surface includes a depression in the heel region for receiving a heel of the foot.

3. The article of footwear of claim 2, wherein the foot-engaging surface includes a depression in an area generally underlying fourth and fifth metatarsal heads of the foot.

4. The article of footwear of claim 3, wherein the foot-engaging surface includes a first elevated region in an area generally underlying a medial arch of the foot.

5. The article of footwear of claim 4, wherein the foot-engaging surface includes a second elevated region in peripheral areas of the foot-engaging surface.

6. The article of footwear of claim 1, wherein the foot-supporting member incorporates a fluid-filled bladder.

7. The article of footwear of claim 1, wherein the foot-supporting member includes a downward cant from a medial to a lateral side of the foot-engaging surface.
8. The article of footwear of claim 1, wherein the foot-engaging surface includes a region of reduced support in a medial forefoot area, the foot-supporting member being substantially formed of a first material and the region of reduced support including a second material, the first material being less compressible than the second material.
9. The article of footwear of claim 8, wherein the region of reduced support is located adjacent a fore portion of a first metatarsal and an aft portion of a proximal hallux of the foot of the wearer.
10. The article of footwear of claim 1, wherein the foot-engaging surface is at a third elevation in the forefoot region and the foot-engaging surface is at a fourth elevation at the heel region, the third elevation being less than the fourth elevation.
11. The article of footwear of claim 1, wherein a heel plate is incorporated into the foot-supporting member in the heel region.
12. An article of footwear, comprising:
 - an upper for covering at least a portion of a foot of a wearer;
 - a foot-supporting member that is removably-received by the upper, the foot-supporting member being formed of a resilient material and having a foot-engaging surface with a downward cant extending from a medial to a lateral side of the foot-supporting member, and the foot-engaging surface including a region of reduced support located in a medial forefoot area, the region of reduced support providing less support than a lateral forefoot area, the foot-supporting member also having a

first thickness in a forefoot region and a second thickness in a heel region, the first thickness being greater than the second thickness; and
a sole structure attached to the upper.

13. The article of footwear of claim 12, wherein the foot-supporting member includes a lower surface located opposite the foot-engaging surface, the lower surface being at a first elevation in a forefoot region of the foot-supporting member and the lower surface being at a second elevation in a heel region of the foot-supporting member, the first elevation being less than the second elevation to define a recess located under the heel region.

14. The article of footwear of claim 13, wherein the sole structure includes a midsole, a portion of the midsole forming an upward protrusion that mates with the recess for supporting the heel region of the foot-supporting member.

15. The article of footwear of claim 13, wherein the foot-engaging surface is at a third elevation in the forefoot region and the foot-engaging surface is at a fourth elevation in the heel region, the third elevation being less than the fourth elevation.

16. The article of footwear of claim 12, wherein the foot-supporting member is substantially formed of a first material and the region of reduced support includes a second material, the first material being less compressible than the second material.

17. The article of footwear of claim 12, wherein the region of reduced support is located adjacent a fore portion of a first metatarsal and an aft portion of a proximal hallux of the foot.

18. The article of footwear of claim 12, wherein the downward cant is located in a heel region and a portion of a midfoot region of the foot-supporting member.

19. The article of footwear of claim 12, wherein the downward cant is approximately three degrees.

20. The article of footwear of claim 12, wherein the sole structure includes a first region and a second region, the first region being located in a rear-lateral corner of the sole structure and being more compressible than the second region.

21. The article of footwear of claim 12, wherein the sole structure includes an outsole having a first section that is attached to the first region and a second section that is attached to the second region, the first section being separate from the second section to define a line of flexion in the sole structure.

22. The article of footwear of claim 12, wherein a heel plate is incorporated into a heel region of the foot-supporting member for providing support to the heel region.

23. An article of footwear comprising:

an upper defining a void;

a foot-supporting member that is removably-received by the void, the foot-supporting member having a heel region and a forefoot region, the heel region being positioned at a greater elevation than the forefoot region, and the heel region having a thickness that is less than a thickness of the forefoot region; and

a sole structure secured to the upper.

24. The article of footwear of claim 23, wherein the foot-supporting member has a lower surface located opposite a foot-engaging surface, the lower surface being at a first elevation in a forefoot region of the foot-supporting member and the lower surface being at a second elevation in a heel region of the foot-supporting member, the second elevation being greater than the first elevation.

25. The article of footwear of claim 24, wherein the lower surface engages a surface of the void, and the surface of the void is contoured to correspond with a shape of the lower surface.

26. The article of footwear of claim 23, wherein the foot-supporting member has a lower surface located opposite a foot-engaging surface, the foot-engaging surface being at a first elevation in a forefoot region of the foot-supporting member and the foot-engaging surface being at a second elevation in a heel region of the foot-supporting member, the second elevation being greater than the first elevation.